OREGON VOICE

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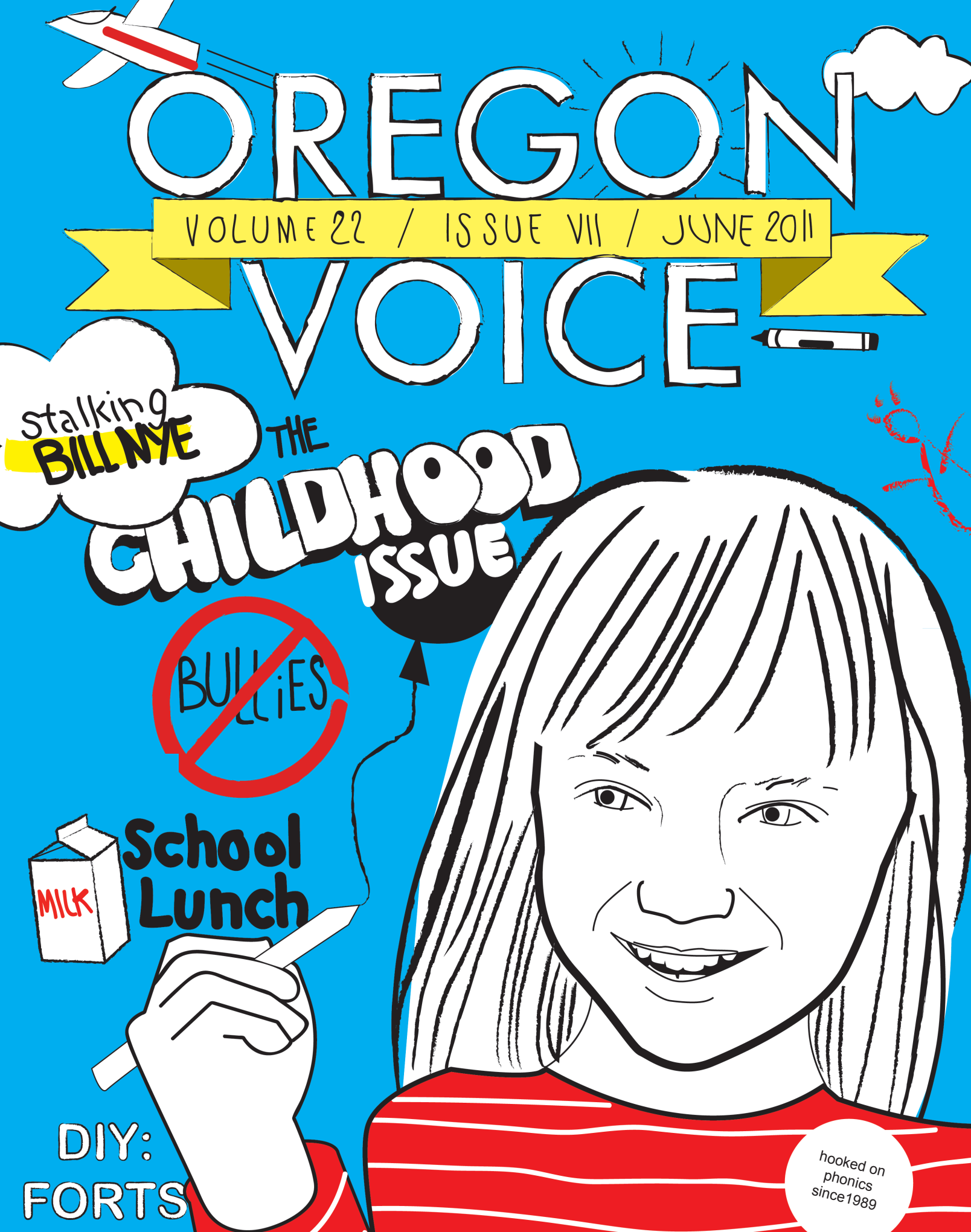
Stalking BILL NYE

THE CHILDHOOD ISSUE

BULLIES

School Lunch

DIY: FORTS



hooked on phonics since1989

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STAFF NOTE:

If the OREGON VOICE were a child, your parents probably wouldn't want you hanging out with us. They saw us transporting boxes of magazines on a cart "borrowed" from the *Daily Emerald*, "adopting" an "abandoned" sandwich board, and displaying our magazines on campus through "our" vibrantly painted distribution boxes. They even heard we were slangin' Pixy Stix out of our EMU office. In general, they find us a little too PG-13.

With this issue, we seek to make amends. Forget about our ill words towards the ASUO. Forget about our excessive cursing. Forget we taught you how to roll a blunt. Forget we suggested you overdose on MDMA [see Corrections below]. Forget everything Brett Sisun ever wrote. The Childhood Issue is our Return to Innocence.

At least it was supposed to be. We hoped for a coffee table-friendly issue, free of profanity, penises, and pot. And while we (mostly) accomplished that feat, some of our writers didn't make it through the issue without landing on Dateline's "To Catch a Predator" radar.

Nonetheless, the Childhood Issue features what we would consider "real" journalism. Stories about a Portland "unschooling" project, a Eugene preschool that serves homeless families, and the sterilization of school playgrounds shed light on issues that affect "the next generation." Bill Nye brings us closer to nirvana, bullies continue to be a sensitive subject, and the child-leash debate rages on. To help you get in touch with your inner-child, Cara Merendino offers a refresher course on fort-building, Noah Porter blows the whistle on an intergovernmental conspiracy relating to artificial flavoring, and Pretty Eyes spits wisdom one last time.

Enjoy this rare bit of non-required reading over the summer. See you in the fall.

The OV

CORRECTIONS: THE ROLLING ISSUE

There is a potentially grave error printed in the sidebar to the feature story, "The War on Hugs." The recommended dosage of MDMA is135 *milligrams*, not grams. Oops. Do not take 135 grams of MDMA because you will die. We regret this error. Luckily, the misprint is so major that no rational person would take it for truth; 135 grams of MDMA would cost around $10,000. Nonetheless, our bad.

OFFICIAL STUFF

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WHAT THE HECK?

MANSWERS

words **JOSEPH DE SOSA**
art **NICK JACOBS**

For only eight months have I been an adult male. So naturally, I have a lot of questions that could use some answering. Not living at home any more, I have restricted paternal access. So what options do I have? Who should I turn to? Spike TV claims to have the manswers I need.

Excited to learn what it means to be a man, I switch on the tube. With pad and pen in hand I ready myself. First man question: How effective are women's breasts at washing cars? Okay, that's fine. I learned something about the usefulness of female breasts in relation to car washing. I think. I didn't write it down because ... never mind. So, first question: not really what I was looking for, but hey, it is only the first episode I've seen and the first question answered.

After 4 minutes of commercials, the second question to be manswered is asked by the hairy and testosterone-emitting announcer. "How many non-alcoholic beers does it take to get drunk?" Uh...

I guess one day I might need to know this. Except probably not. First of all, I think the best solution to this problem would be to have at minimum mostly semi-literate friends. Secondly, is this a joke? Well, yes it turns out. But still. What the heck? If you're at a party and the biggest problem is that the beer is non-alcoholic, there has got to be someone sober enough to drive you to the store to pick up some actual booze, or else it isn't really a problem is it?

I turn off my television, retire my pen and pad, and spend another sleepless night searching for the manswers to the questions I really have. WTH Manswers? You only answer the questions of pre-pubescent teens.

MOM

words (**ANGSTY) CARA MERENDINO**

What do you mean I have to eat my vegetables? If I have to eat this cauliflower I am running away from home. I can't go out until I finish my homework? Are you serious? My teacher has it out for me anyways, and I got that detention because Jenny was late picking me up … it's not my fault! It's not even that big of a deal, anyways! And no, Jenny isn't a bad influence on me. She gets straight "A"s! I make my own choices, I'm not a little kid anymore, so stop treating me like one, please. (Door slam.) No, I'm not coming out until you start treating me like an adult! LEAVE ME ALOOONNNNEEE! It's my body and I can tattoo it if I want to, and wearing all black does not make me a goth OR define who I am. I just like it OK?! Grounded?! Are you serious? But everyone's going to be at Bobby's party, and I can't miss it! I hate it here and everyone SUCKS. I can't wait to move cross country for college and get far, far, far away from this stupid town. WTH Mom!? I love you so much, what would I do without you?

FLAVOR X

words **NOAH PORTER**

It's no big secret that fruit candies often stray from the natural flavors of their real-world inspirations. Does artificial banana taste anything like one of Ms. Chiquitas? No. Is a cherry starburst even reminiscent of an actual cherry? I can honestly tell you, I do not know. If any of the flavors in your traditional pack of cherry, lemon, raspberry, orange, strawberry-kiwi OR watermelon, and grape, even the truest of the flavors (which is probably orange) is only a sugary memory of an actual fruit that grows on a tree. Notice that I said strawberry-kiwi OR watermelon, because

WTH Internet, you make living without a TV too easy. **WTH** UO facebook users, I know it's week 10. **WTH** bike thieves, I hope you know there's a special place in hell for scum like you. **WTH** Bagel Bites, I can eat pizza whenever I like regardless. **WTH** Katy Perry, your singing sucks, but I guess you're kind of fine, so nevermind. **WTH** UO Career Fair, no one wants to work at Enterprise Rent-A-Car. **WTH** Lunchables, no veggie option!?

the two suspiciously similar flavors stray so far from anything that actually exists in our physical world that i have to beg the question. Are strawberry-kiwi and watermelon indeed the same flavor? Are they simply alter-egos of some laboratry-concieved Flavor X that can be marketed to the masses over the shrouded alias of either moniker? While neither tastes anything like the fruit it's named after, could one nameless-but-delicious flavor be passed off as both with the help of your perceptive pre-dispositions? I cannot say for sure. I can only present you with these humble truths. I have searched far and wide for packages of candy that contained the two flavors in the same package. Certainly no candy company would be bold enough to attempt to pass off the same flavor twice in one wrapper. After scouring the candy shelves at Tom's, Hilly's, and Little's respective markets to find that my hypothesis was indeed correct — nobody, not even Brach's, dare put strawberry-kiwi and watermelon (collectively known as Flavor X) in the same package. Considering the extreme popularity of both watermelon and strawberry-kiwi, this paradox can only be indicative of a marketing illusion, a lie that has been fed to us since childhood.

COOTIES

words **CARA MERENDINO**
art **NICK JACOBS**

Cooties. What are they? How do they spread? Where on the playground can one find a witchdoctor to receive a ritualistic cootie shot? How in god's name are there so many cootie shots circulating on the black market without FDA regulations? Growing up in New Jersey, I heard that cooties are easily prevented by a "circle-circle-dot-dot," with a "circle-circle-square-square" to spread it through the bloodstream, and a "circle-circle-knife-knife" to guarantee a lifetime of protection. This brings me to my next quandary: How is it that cooties keep spreading around the world without any active anti-cooties movement? At the rate of cootie contraction we're at now, cooties could potentially wipe out an entire generation of youths! What makes cooties so dangerous to the children of the world is that there are so many variations of the cootie virus that it is impossible to tell exactly what they are. Come to think of it, cooties seem to only be a hazard in that they exist merely as something to be afraid of, but ask a kid: What does it feel like to have cooties? Does it feel like butterflies when you see the boy that teases you all the time? Does it make you throw up? Do cooties make you itch? No one knows, but the collective child consciousness seems to believe that cooties are a threat worth vaccinating against even if they don't know the symptoms, and it has been that way for a long, long time. So, what is to be done? The Oregon Voice is on it, and believe you me, this journalist will NOT rest until cooties are both explained and contained. Stay tuned for updates.

DROPPIN EAVES ON YO'BEHIND

We decided that it's basically like the Hogwarts of nature.

She doesn't believe in sports bras so it's like boom-ba-bloom-ba-bloom.

My church has a podcast too!

Come one, come all, bring your nitrous."

Excuse me miss, but could I bum a tampon?

Is that hash or raisins?

PRE-LOVED STUFFED ANIMAL

Is the Man trying to simulate nostalgia?

words **RAYAN KHAYAT**
art **JULIAN EARNEST**

Wandering around a shiny and overpriced Borders bookstore, I was taken aback when I saw a pile of stuffed cats staring at me. The clothed cat dolls looked strikingly familiar, but it took me a while to place them. The character was Huckle Cat, a young feline who dreams of flying airplanes one day in the Richard Scarry children's books, which I adored as a child. What I saw was the physical embodiment of a memory, a forgotten dream, something deep in the confines of my 21-year-old brain, carefully extracted and assembled for me to keep.

Feeling a serious case of the nostalgic blues, I impulse-bought him, took him home, placed him on my bed, and then I noticed something. The doll's fuzzy fabric was softly worn with a few patches of dust and a faint layer of grayish fuzz that ordinarily takes years of play and appreciation to accumulate. This stuffed animal, I realized, was manufactured to look pre-loved.

While the iconic, mass-produced Raggedy Anne doll simulates hand craftiness, the stuffed Huckle Cat that I copped from Borders simulates something far more personal: nostalgia. Its makers went to lengths to make it look like a relic from my childhood.

By consuming and creating emotional and personal significance for its own sake, we run the risk of divorcing ourselves from what we could truly feel. We can take a photo using a vintage camera to create a keepsake that enhances the significance of a moment, and it immediately becomes an item of deep personal value. What is worrying is that habits of consumption can lean towards creating personal and emotional experiences that could superficially fulfill them and tame the need for real ones. Even more frightening is the possibility that simulating nostalgia and significance can become the motivating factor for our own life experiences, instead of actually having truly meaningful experiences. Theories aside, Huckle Cat is still comforting to hold and endearingly cute, yet it's never going to be as comforting as it's trying to look.

LECTURE HALL HEROES

YouTube pranksters bring comic book legends into the classroom

words **LEIGH BOURGEOIS**

A new form of college shenanigans has emerged. Of course, it is also an internet meme. But don't let that fool you. These kids are legit: They costume themselves as dark lords, superheroes, and arcade game effigies. Imagine sitting in a crowded library or a lecture hall. Then in comes this 6-foot-tall blue blob with two raised white eyes, looking vaguely confused. You think, What's all this about? Enter Pac-Man, in hot pursuit.

This formula can be repeated with many variations: ninjas with light-sabers, ninjas with confetti (this ninja sect clearly being more festive in nature, and less intergalactic), Orkin Man and Creepy-Looking Fly Dude, as well as similar but less combative spectacles like the Ghostbusters silently tracking down their quarry between computer terminals and library bookshelves, and Clark Kent getting that fated phone call in Chemistry 201. The list goes on.

It is moments like these that require much chin-stroking. And I come to you now with not only a decidedly well-stroked chin, but also a genuine and persistent curiosity. Why are ninjas with light-sabers so much fun to watch, and ninjas with confetti so underwhelming? Why is the blue Pac-Man enemy who sprints and screams so much funnier than the one that merely treads around the classroom floor? Why do I love seeing the red-and-blue blur of Superman dashing up the auditorium stairs? Why do I care when I could be watching something with more punch lines? More Tina Faye? More Tracy Morgan? More Lolcats?

Don't get me wrong — I fucking *love* Lolcats. But those are jokes people wrote from the safety of their feline-infested apartments. Clever phrases are easy, safe. No one is dressing up in a cat costume and dancing around their boss' office. That would be entirely inappropriate. Likewise, showing up to class in a Darth Vader costume is breaking some long-held etiquette.

But, in one of the most popular videos, this is exactly what happens. A packed auditorium. An interloper in full Vader gear waves a light-saber around in front of the class for a solid 60 seconds. But no Jedi Knights ever rush in to make battle. Instead, he paces back and forth, slicing the air. "On guard," he seems to say, "You don't know the power of the dark side!" Then he promptly mounts his saber and walks out, chill as the Death Star.

I also imagine him saying other things as well, like, "While all you noobs are taking notes on electron formations, I'm taking over galaxies and shit. Huzzzah!" And this is the interpretation I favor because I like to think of these characters as messengers that try to puncture the adult world as remnants of childhood dreams. And these apparitions seem most funny because they never flinch. They never question themselves. They just mount and walk out. Save your applause. Listen, for a second, to the dark side.

SYNTH-WAVE

A brief history of memory music

words **BEN STONE**
art **MEAGHAN LARKIN**

More than a decade ago, a Scottish band called Boards of Canada released an album titled *Music Has the Right to Children*. It was a beautiful collection of drum machine beats and bittersweet songs with interludes made on old synthesizers. Its clearest influence was the National Film Board of Canada, which produced the warped and bleached educational and wildlife films that the band grew up with, often scored by wandering, hokey synthesizer melodies. Throughout *Music*, these films are also referenced through reverbed clips of obscure narration and children laughing. Of this effect, Mike Sandison of BOC wrote, "It's completely out of place, and yet in that context that you can really feel the sadness of a child's voice. Being a kid is such a transitory, fleeting part of your lifespan."

A long time has passed since Boards of Canada released *Music Has the Right to Children*, but their nostalgic droning sound has tinted countless electronic albums since. This sound has caught a lot of attention lately, and some adopters of it have been lumped into a new genre: chillwave. The cold beats have turned into warm thumps, and the sampled kid laughter has either disappeared or been replaced by 20-something-year-old singers. The tone has changed, too. Boards of Canada created

a sound that you couldn't pin to any specific musical era, but you knew what it reminded you of in relation to your own life. This new wave mostly identifies specifically with 1980s electronic pop music, and so the nostalgia it provokes is of a period that many current listeners were not conscious of. Artists like Neon Indian, Com Truise, and Memory Tapes are currently adapting this style, recreating the '80s sound as a hazy beach party at the end of summer.

The *New York Times* says that these synthesizer bands are sprouting up right now because "it's recession-era music: low-budget and danceable." But it's more than that. Especially for our generation, which became conscious of the world at about the same time as the internet hit big. The older we get, the faster the world we used to live in is being destroyed and replaced. These musicians are counting on the fact that we are starting to reminisce about slower and simpler times, so they give us simple music processed by antique machines. They know that the Boards of Canada melancholy is starting to mean more to us. But they also know that it's just as important to cruise in the sunshine as it is to flip through photo albums.

BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK FROM THE INVENTORS AT THE VIVIAN OLUM CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER. THANKS Y'ALL!

DEAR PRETTY EYES

Submit questions for Pretty Eyes to oregonvoice@gmail.com. For emergencies, contact the Dear Pretty Eyes 24-hour crisis hotline: 503-975-2241.

wisdom **JOSH KENNETT**
photo **SREANG HOK**

Dear Pretty Eyes,

What are the steps one needs to take to jump a dude's bones?

—Diggin' After Yummy Men

Hello DAYM,

Show him that you are interested in him without coming on too strong. Give him the option. Guys are attracted to girls that are independent, confident, and have style. Know that. If you are already happy with the friends you have, then guys will come to you without you desperately grasping for man meat to fill your stomach.

Dear Pretty Eyes,

I recently got dumped in totally bogus circumstances. I'm over the tears, but now I'm just physically sick over this. Not only is my ego throbbing in self-pitying pain, but I'm physically love sick. I can't eat, sleep, or enjoy myself properly and sometimes I think punching this dude in the face would be the only way I might feel a LITTLE better. What do I do? I don't want to be with someone who doesn't wanna be with me, but I also don't feel comfortable being dumped by someone whose only reason for dumping me seems to be an existential crisis of his own. Ugh!

—Ditched Under Most Pretentious, Evil Delusions

Dear DUMPED,

How to cope with being dumped — something I have had no experience with. This is one of the hardest experiences to stomach and move on from, so I don't think I can tell you not to worry about it and let go. Were you happy together? Was he in a seriously down mood all the time? Or apathetic? At least you have nothing to blame yourself for. Those who cannot love someone else usually are those that do not love themselves. It is better that you separate yourself from someone you cannot help in order to protect yourself from being brought into existential crises of your own.

Nonetheless, I do think you can make an attempt to help this person, although I'm sure you have tried. Know this: communication is key. If he is unwilling to communicate what is going on, there is little you can do. If he feels isolated from everyone around him because he is stuck in endless cynicism and critical thinking, then maybe you can convince him he is moving in the opposite direction. The answer to his crisis is being here now. It is accepting who he is and those around him and either rolling with it or doing something about it. The meaning of life, I believe, isn't a secret. It's being in tune with how you feel and knowing why you feel that way and addressing it or embracing it. If he feels unhappy and doesn't know why, then he best start talking about it, at least trying to. Maybe suggest him a therapist. I believe everyone can use someone to talk to about anything, no matter how happy they may believe they are.

For your own emotional and physical wellbeing, I suggest going to Yoga West for some Kundalini Yoga. This will bring life back into your lungs. Treat yourself well. Get to know yourself again and what you like to do by yourself. Look to your close friends for emotional support and understanding and allow them to try to fill that gap in your heart. They may not be able to fill everything, but good friends have something very important: empathy. I also suggest you not pity yourself but have some compassion for yourself. Yes, that might help.

Dear Pretty Eyes,

If a #2 pencil is so popular, then why is it still #2?

-Pensive

It's #2 because the #1 pencil got really self-obsessed and arrogant and thought it was the shit. One day its tip broke and none of the other pencils would give it a pencil sharpener. From that day on that invincible god overdosed on drugs to make up for its lackluster appearance. Just like the Elvis Presleys and the Jim Morrisons, #1 does not always mean #1.

But seriously, #2 is called #2 because it's the second darkest of the four major grades of pencil. #1 is not popular because while it is the darkest lead, it is also the softest, which means it smudges easily and needs re-sharpening often. It is sometimes used for writing on the backs of photographs because it leaves a readable mark without making an indent. So really, #2 pencils are #1.

TO LEASH OR NOT TO LEASH? *Is* that a question?

YES: TUGGING TOWARDS THE TRUTH

words **C.W. KEATING**
art **TAYLOR JOHNSTON**

Demeaning. Inhuman. Animal-like.

These are just a few of the terms people use to describe child leashes — those nifty little devices that keep your kid from running into the street and pooping on your neighbor's yard. Opponents argue that keeping your hyperactive kid on a leash is analogous to child cruelty. This is total baloney. Leash kids grow up to be intelligent, adventurous, and self-reliant people.

I would know. I'm one of them.

From the age of 4 to 6, my mother kept me on a child leash. At that age all I remember were colors, the alphabet, and how mind-crushingly awesome T-Rexes were. I wasn't too worried about being "treated like an animal." I was just thankful to be by Ma's side throughout the day.

The anti-child-leash brigade argues that handholding instead of child leashes are a better alternative because it emphasizes intimacy and the parent-child relationship. Balderdash! When I was 5 the last thing I wanted to do was hold my mother's hand. The child leash allowed me to explore within a carefully circumscribed area that my mother could safely oversee while also preserving my street cred with the other preschoolers.

What leash opponents fail to realize is that being a single mom is a thankless task. Ma relied on the leash to — literally — keep me in line. She wasn't a "lazy parent," as opponents like to claim. Nor was she a negligent parent. She just happened to be a poor college student who couldn't afford a babysitter. Many parents are in this predicament, and the child leash gives them a safe, easy, and affordable way to control their children.

Those who claim that this kind of control is "demeaning" are missing the point entirely. When you're a parent, your child is (or at least should be) the most important thing in your life. In this increasingly fast-paced world filled with unknown dangers, speeding cars, and child molesters, the last thing we need to do is chastise parents for keeping their kids safe.

Besides, have you seen that adorable monkey harness on sale at K-Mart? I'd latch that onto my belt loop any day.

NO: SPIRIT ANIMAL CRUELTY

words **JORDAN CHESNUT**

No child actually believes they are a child. The majority of the time, chil'en wholeheartedly see themselves as animals amidst the adult world. Kind of like the plot of *Animorphs*, kids have the ability to escape the troubles of human-hood by regressing into their cat or dolphin counterparts.

This creature bipolarity isn't just a product of the universal kid-consciousness. In reality, the modern family manages kids pretty much the same way as they do the house dog. Adults play into the role reversal with neatly packaged cookies (a tasty treat for good behavior), pet nicknames (used when youngsters are particularly cute), scolding and finger wagging (when naughty), and — of course — child leashes. It is no wonder we grew up trying to eat under tables on all fours.

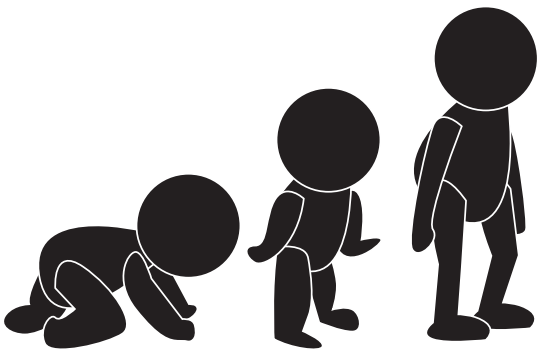
Tethered children, a 21st Century phenomenon, are most often seen in places with steep drops and strangers. This isn't to say if I had a child I would be necessarily opposed to attaching him or her to a leash in the backyard, but that doesn't mean it's right. Harnessing a tiny human is one of those strange American ideas that have caught on with WalMart, Disneyworld, and overprotective parents.

The main concern should revolve around the animals that co-exist in a kid's brain — what I mean is, do leashes domesticate imagination? How far can a plot of "jungle cats" progress when the protagonists are roped with a leash, like some secondary umbilical cord, to their mother as she talks on the cell phone?

Fast forward 20 years and the generation of leash-bearing children are instead bound to a dead-end job, a harassing lover, or maybe even their parents who roped them in the first place. Do kids a favor and un-clip their collars, and instead let them play and dream in the safety of a fenced area, like a Chuck-E-Cheese or dog parks.

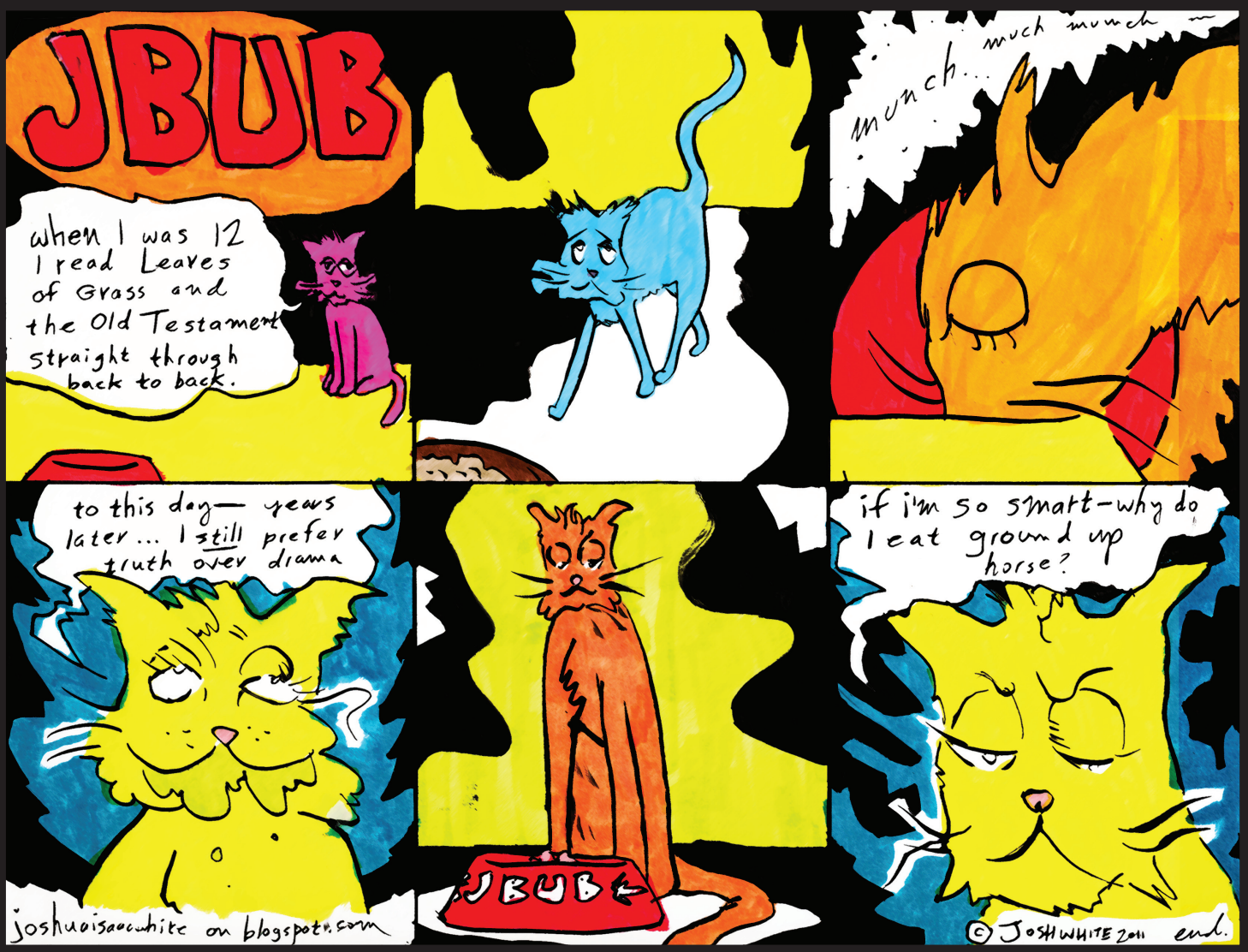
CHILDHOOD IS COMING TO AN END WHEN...

words **JORDAN CHESNUT**



- Sexual references in sitcoms make sense
- Rugrats "grow up" in order to maintain viewership
- McDonald's playpens are technically off-limits
- Socks replace stuffed animals for gifts during birthdays and/or religious holidays
- Printed t-shirts transition from "Grandma's favorite" to "My eyes are up here [arrow]"
- Certain music artists are played just because they are nostalgic
- AOL instant messenger gets more attention than family
- Parents start confessing their problems a little too openly
- The phrase "childhood is never over" gets thrown around out of denial
- You no longer play, you hang out
- Pantsing is considered sexual harassment

comic **JOSH WHITE**


JBUB
when I was 12 I read Leaves of Grass and the Old Testament straight through back to back.
munch... much much
to this day— years later... I still prefer truth over drama
if i'm so smart—why do I eat ground up horse?
JBUB
joshuaisaacwhite on blogspot.com
© JOSH WHITE 2011 end.

TV STARS FROM CHILDHOOD: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

words **JOSEPH DE SOSA**
art **JULIAN EARNEST**

- **Steven Michael Burns** (Steve from Blue's Clues) – Burns left Blue when his hair started to leave him. In 2003, he released an album with the help of the bassist from the Flaming Lips.
- **Face** (that chameleonic floating eyes and mouth that hosted Nick Jr.) – On October 11, 2004, Face was replaced by the younger, hipper Piper O'Possum.
- **Fred McFeely Rogers** (aka Mr. Rogers) – Deceased.
- **Paul Reubens** (aka Pee Wee Herman) – Reubens was on the top in the '80s. His public adoration came to a screeching halt July of 1991, when he was arrested for indecent exposure (masturbating in an adult theater). He fought his way back into the world of success in the late 1990s, only to be found in possession of child pornography in November 2002. The charges were dropped. Reubens is still around today and is rumored to be working on a new film.
- **Jonathan Taylor Thomas** (Tim Allen's son on *Home Improvement*, Simba in *The Lion King*, and Pinocchio in The *Adventures of Pinocchio*) – There is only myth and heresy surrounding his whereabouts. The most promising lead comes from internet commenter KPook: "He is gay, he lives like 20 min from me in Kits, in Vancouver. he also got a bit cubbby too…:)."
- **Earl John Hindman** (Tim Allen's confidante and neighbor, Wilson, in *Home Improvement)* – Died of cancer in 2003.
- **Otto Rocket** (the pre-pubescent daredevil from *Rocket Power)* – Otto can be seen at the X-Games. He is that guy in the crowd claiming to be better than whoever is actually competing.

SORRY NERDS

Bullying still exists

words **WILL MEHIGAN**
art **JULIAN WATTS**

Although childhood was mostly a magical time, it also had its fair share of fear and loathing. Always on the lookout for anything from pantsing to a complete beat-down, many children couldn't rest easy until bully prominence declined through high school. But don't get too comfortable, because Eugene is still the home of at least two bullies.

University of Oregon student Mary Lucarelli began bullying when she used a rolling backpack to attack a classmate in middle school. However, she didn't take physical bullying further than that incident, choosing instead to build her reputation as a bully through subtle intimidation and insults. Her bullying was so natural and effortless that she was able to make other girls feel bad without even trying. She has only recently learned that many of her current friends admit to having been afraid of her in their freshman year of high school. "I just thought I was really cool," explains Lucarelli. "I was just feeling really good about myself. It was a really great time in my life."

In her senior year of high school, she was assigned to peer-edit the science project of a girl she claims to hate to this day. Disgusted by the incompetency of the project, she said to a friend, "What a dodo project." This caused the girl to cry, and because of the bad-girl image Lucarelli had cultivated, the gossip at school was that this was an example of her signature malice, and it didn't come as a surprise to anyone. This was when she knew she had to leave bullying behind. "I know some of those girls will never talk to me again," she says.

Eugene is also home to Chris "Jersey" Borrelle, who made a name for himself as a fifth grader in the New Jersey bully scene through food fights, water balloons, fart bombs, and table-topping. But the seeds of his bullying were planted when a third grade Borrelle was diagnosed with Crohn's, an incurable disease of the digestive system that mainly manifests itself in stomach pain and bleeding diarrhea. "I think I started bullying because I wanted other people to feel my pain," says Borrelle. He viewed this as a more empowering coping technique than sulking, which he has seen many people with Crohn's succumb to. He says to these people, "Bloody poops or what, deal with it."

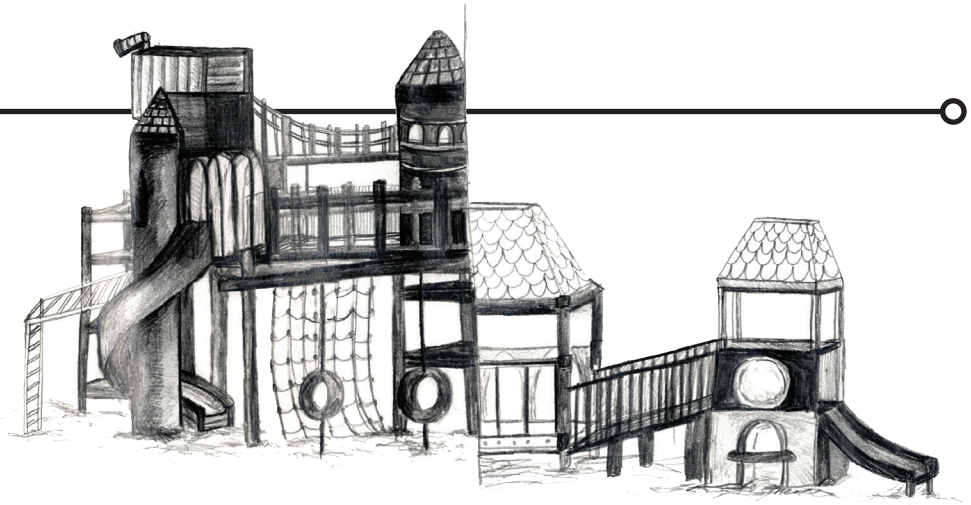
And deal with it he has. By developing a quick wit, a knack for planning large-scale pranks, and refined methodology, Borrelle continues to bully to this very day. Though his pace slowed with his move to Oregon, he has still expanded into kleptomania, public defecation, and long-term bully wars. He's let dogs out of a house party to create a distraction and steal a poster. He's table-topped people who were once thought to be untable-toppable. He's pooped in backyards during crowded parties. He's participated in both verbal and physical fights on 18th and Hilyard, an area he sees as "bully heaven." And although he tones down the verbal abuse when it comes to bullying girls, he didn't hesitate to pee on one in 2008.

Despite these recent successes, some critics assert that this bully's prime may already be over. Frequent target Will Kanellos, who once had his bike lock key thrown away by Borrelle, says, "The last time I saw him I could tell he was struggling to think of an insult." After a brief silence Borrelle told Kanellos, "Uncuff your jeans," and walked away. Julian Watts, another favorite target of Borrelle's, thinks he's washed up, saying of his most recent bullying, "It's just kind of pathetic now." But Borrelle plans to respond to his critics with some of his best work and has plans to poop in Kanellos's backpack before summer.

So what does the future hold for these two bullies? Lucarelli plans to continue being mean to people behind their backs, but also make a greater effort to be friendly rather than intimidating. Bullying for her is now done in secrecy. "It's like a little treat to myself," she says. On the other hand, Borrelle isn't totally ready to quit but still realizes that "it has to come to an end soon." His impending college graduation could be the end of an era, but it won't be the end of a lifestyle. "I'll take an opportunity if I see it," says Borrelle. "I'll always have a passion for it."

And so Eugene shall continue to live in fear.

PLAYIN' IT A LITTLE TOO SAFE



They don't make playgrounds like they used to. Here's why.

words **NOAH DEWITT**
art **MEAGHAN LARKIN**

"Na-na-na-na-boo-boo! You can't catch me!" Even today those snotty, taunting words still bring me back to the playground I grew up on. Cops and robbers, hot lava monster, and other tag variations kept my grade school homies and I in a near-sprint for upwards of an hour. Playing tag got us high not because it was particularly interesting, but because our arena was a towering wooden castle with tubular slides, fire poles, seesaws, bridges, swings, and monkey bars — our imaginations couldn't help but take us to wild places.

Although I have seldom set foot on a playground since elementary school (except in the dead of night and in association with malt liquor), it isn't hard to see that playgrounds are not what they used to be. These days, seesaws have springs, merry-go-rounds have "hydraulic speed limiters," and just about everything is plastic. As we phase out the heavy-duty, fast-moving, lofty equipment of yesteryear and replace it with gentle, immobile, low-to-the-ground features, playgrounds and the games played on them are becoming decreasingly awesome. Well, it turns out there's a reason.

Scared of harming children or worse, dealing with their litigation-happy parents, consumer safety organizations are changing safety standards to prevent injuries. While injuries have indeed gone down, so has the amount of fun had at the park, and it may be hindering child development. Dun dun dun!

Some playground safety standards make perfect sense. Requiring parks to put cushy fall surfaces (such as sand, wood fiber, or rubber matting) under play structures greatly reduces broken bones and concussions without affecting fun levels. Before the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) came out with its Public Playground Safety Handbook, the default fall surface was asphalt.

Making sure playgrounds don't contain gnarly carcinogens is another no-brainer. Until the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) passed standard F2075 in 2003, it was perfectly legal to build playgrounds with a kind of treated wood that leaches arsenic to the touch, according to a white paper published by the Center for Justice and Democracy.

Other standards, however, have downsides. For example, some studies warn against slides taller than 6 feet, and as a result, the spiraling 12-foot chutes that make kids go, "Weeeeee!" are a dying breed.

"This makes sense only if you want to assure that no kid older than 7 ever gets excited about going to the park," wrote Lenore Skenazy, author of *Free-Range Kids*, in a Salon.com article. Skenazy believes that risk is a part of growing up.

"Now that public playgrounds account for just three or four fatalities a year — tragic, of course, but rarer than lightning deaths — are the endless edicts really helping?" wrote Skenazy. "If, for every kid who doesn't break his leg, millions more never develop the muscles to do a chin-up, or the endurance to play a game of tag, or any interest in playing outside, period, thanks to dumbed-down playgrounds: Is this really a good trade-off?"

Joe Frost, a theorist on child's play and professor emeritus at the University of Texas, is of a similar opinion. He has published volumes on the importance of play in a child's development. And due to "a frenzy of litigation over playground injuries," he writes, child's play is on the decline.

The fact that PlaygroundInjuryLawsuit.com exists suggests that playground-related legal claims are not uncommon. The average totally neurotic parent is quick to sue the crap out of a city's parks department if his or her child ever gets an ouchie on the playground, even if it's just a freak hot lava monster accident. Whether these lawsuits aim to protect children from hazards or to generate income is debatable, but they've definitely impacted those who manufacture and maintain playgrounds.

"We were just feeling so nervous about litigation and so bound by the guidelines that creativity was really stymied," said Emily Proudfoot, a landscape architect for the city of Eugene Parks and Open Spaces department. "There were so many restrictions that playgrounds became just kind of bland and boring."

Instead of jumping through the hoops that the CPSC and the ASTM erected, many playground manufacturers and planners took the easy way out, building playgrounds that were as unthreatening as they were unfun. Climbing up and zipping down a simple slide is stimulating only up to a certain point, after which most kids would rather be playing video games.

"Now we are building equipment that kids are not quite sure how to play with," Proudfoot told me, "which forces them to use their brains and their bodies. It pushes their envelopes. They find ways to do all kinds of tricks on it. These meet the safety guidelines *and* promote creative play."

Kids in Eugene are lucky. Unlike their parents, who have probably considered encasing them in bubble wrap to prevent injury, the administrators of Eugene parks and schools understand that eliminating risk entirely is impossible. I spoke with one school playground maintenance worker and three park playground inspectors, and all agreed that safety standards sometimes go too far. Although they vigilantly remove undue hazards, they're as dedicated to preserving fun as they are to increasing safety.

D.A.R.E. TO ADMIT IT'S NOT WORKING

words **MAGGIE APPEL**

D! I won't do drugs.

A! Won't have an attitude.

R! I will respect myself.

E! I will educate me.

Yes, and it sounds like you won't be having any fun either. But at the end of the day you get a free t-shirt and a pizza party, so it's easy to belt out those lyrics and diligently complete a survey as if you really will end up respecting yourself someday. Below the video of singing children that these lyrics were retrieved from lies a comment all parents must come to grips with: "half those kids gonna be smoking blunts in a few years." The youngster's inevitable adventures in cannabis curiosity are unhindered by pencils and t-shirts, and therefore the transition from bubble gum to blunts has not really improved since Our Lady Reagan of Great Ideas sparked up the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program in 1983.

But how does this transition work? The natural quest to get high begins at approximately age 7 and continues on into adulthood: Little Billy throws back a few too many caffeinated sodas at a birthday party and realizes that the chemical effects are, indeed, powerful enough to simulate a more enjoyable experience with the group of "friends" his mother has assigned to him. Billy, and perhaps a few lasting friends from the birthday party, move on to sugar experimentation: shoveling Pop Rocks into their sodas, covering anything and everything in Fun Dip, snorting lines of Smarties off the back of their Trapper-Keepers, etc. However, eventually Billy and friends realize the "high" they experience from their creations is more an effect of their initial decision to be high. Shortly Billy will be introduced into the world of inhalants when he realizes that an excessive amount of AXE body spray does more than attract pubescent babes, Sharpies aren't just for bathroom graffiti, and a whippet is more than just a sad-looking dog. By the time Billy enters high school cough syrup is still more accessible than alcohol and the Robo-Trip kicks off an adventure into the world of Aunt Janet's pharmaceuticals, and eventually all white powders are appealing to Billy. Eventually Billy's mom will find a joint in the pocket of his jeans, and Billy will either get it together or be one of the many druggies to come out of his graduating class. Note: Marijuana and/or HRD may be inserted at any stage.

But isn't there a federally funded program to tell Billy about drugs and alcohol?

At some point during the early years of this journey, probably around the fifth grade, Billy will receive a bunch of free pencils from a program called D.A.R.E. During this time Billy will actively participate because D.A.R.E. is more fun than learning about the Boston Tea Party, and he respects the man in the room with the gun. The program will take up about an hour of class time every week and Billy will be encouraged to "just say no." Billy will totally buy into this idea, and proudly sport his D.A.R.E t-shirt and perhaps win the D.A.R.E. essay contest and read it aloud at the program's "graduation." However, the skills Billy attained learning to "just say no" to peer pressure will come to a head when he is offered marijuana (see quest to get high), and quickly realizes that the real way to educate himself about drugs is to try them. Since D.A.R.E. never discussed the educational benefits of experimentation, Billy is on his own.

Billy's story is just one completely fictional example (based in thruthiness) of how the quest to get high can turn out. However, there is nothing fictional about the 75 percent of America's classrooms that facilitate D.A.R.E. programs every year, which "[have] a less than small effect on reducing drug use," according to the most recent study published by the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (and about one million other studies done since '83).

Despite the lengthy list of studies disproving the effectiveness of this program, it continues to be supported by parents and an estimated $40 million in federal funding, though there is controversy over the exact amount spent on D.A.R.E. The U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools distributes something like $475 million to states each year to give to school districts for drug education programs, and how much of that is spent on D.A.R.E is not efficiently tracked. Regardless, if America's education system is going down the drain, and drug-free swag can't keep Billy from embarking on the natural quest to get high, why is D.A.R.E. receiving any cash at all?

WORD TO YOUR MOTHER

Midwives put women first

words **TYLER PELL**
art **JOSH KENNETT**

In the United States, the midwife-aided home birth is oft viewed as an alternative method to the "conventional" hospital birth. Less than a percent of all births take place at home, and midwifery is actually illegal in 11 states. But the alternative-ness goes beyond facts and figures.

"My mom actually traded a canoe for my older sister," explained fellow Voice staffer Maggie Appel. Thankfully, Maggie extrapolated: The canoe wasn't exchanged for her sister directly, but used as payment to a midwife who helped deliver her. "To be honest, I wish my mom would have just kept the canoe," said a deadpanned Appel.

While canoe currency isn't the standard in midwifery, its occasional employment illustrates the flexible, accommodating service midwives provide.

"A lot of people think it's really way out there. It's all that New-Age stuff and we sit around in our Birkenstocks, chant, and light candles — and, you know, sometimes we do if that's what the mother wants," says Elise Hansen, a certified midwife who runs her own independent practice in Eugene.

To Hansen, the responsibility of the midwife is to recognize what normal birth is. If she sees something that's moving out of her range of normal, which she proudly admits is much wider than one of an obstetrician, then she'll talk with a doctor.

The problem is: "There's a lot of friction between the medical model and the midwifery model. Our system doesn't allow a working relationship between midwives and doctors." Hansen cites the Netherlands as a case study in effective, integrative birthing practices. Thirty-five percent of babies are born at home in the Netherlands, and the relationship between midwives and doctors is cooperative, not competitive.

Though midwifery is frequently dismissed, even prosecuted, in the U.S., our pregnancy indicators leave something to be desired. The U.S. infant mortality rate is 47th in the world, worse than any other developed nation according to the CIA Factbook.

Despite that, the perception is that a hospital is, and always will be, the safest place to birth a child.

"One of my relatives had told me I'd be [censored] crazy to have a homebirth," said Melissa Gustafson, a Eugene mother expecting her second child.

Even after a successful homebirth, Gustafson's choice to birth her child outside of the hospital was chided.

"Most people just told me, 'luckily you had such an easy labor.' Like I could be dead or something. But I kind of looked at it the opposite way. Luckily I was home, because I was so relaxed and so comfortable. I think that contributed a lot to my easy labor."

Gustafson is one of many women around the country seeking out low-intervention births. The Center for Disease Control recently reported that home births have spiked 20% in the past four years. Studies cite the steady increase of Caesarean sections, and their high cost, as reasons women are avoiding hospital births.

Roughly one third of babies born in this country are delivered via C-section, and the numbers have been rising every year since 1996. So you might be thinking, 'What's the problem with C-sections?' Well, I'm glad you thought that.

The increased tendency to induce labor before a woman's due date, for reasons of convenience, has helped push up the Caesarean rate, because induction is more likely than natural labor to fail and result in a Caesarean, said Dr. George A. Macones, a spokesman for the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

"We should do inductions for good solid medical reasons, not for convenience or the day of the week," Dr. Macones said.

Although an important tool in high-risk births, for the average birth a C-section hovers slightly above sketch. Caesarean critics argue all of the high-tech, baby-monitoring gadgetry that beeps, boops, and bops enough to make a delivery room sound like techno concert, may actually complicate a rather straightforward physiological process.

Says Hansen, "I just don't believe our species would have lasted this long if we needed all these interventions to give birth to our babies."

And if intervention is necessary?

"We carry everything from herbs, Chinese medicine, all the way up to the same injectibles, medications, and pharmaceuticals they have in the hospital. Those are things you can't mess around with," Hansen added.

If you haven't deduced as much yet, midwifery is no joke. It's been practiced for most of human history, and while there may be risks associated with home birth, that's true of hospital birth as well.

Besides, while hospitals will accept all forms of "plastic" payment, it's unlikely they'd accept a fiberglass canoe. Score one for homebirth.

A New Menu

words Lucy Ohlsen

WITH HEALTH IN MIND, SCHOOL CAFETERIAS IN EUGENE AND ACROSS THE NATION ARE MOVING AWAY FROM BURGERS AND FRIES.

photo **COURTNEY HENDRICKS & MARY HALL**

Arriving bright-eyed and breathless from recess, the students at Cesar Chavez Elementary School line up for lunch. "I'm getting *nachos*," states a boisterous blond boy, clutching his reusable plastic yellow tray. Sitting on a petite chair at a miniature table, a small girl with curly brown hair munches on a tiny apple. Milk mustaches are abundant at every table. Sounds like any old school lunch scene. What's not so ordinary is that the boy's nachos are not covered in the classic neon of the canned cheese sauce, and the girl's apple is organic. Behind the scenes at Cesar Chavez is a fight to provide better food for the next generation of Eugenians.

School cafeterias are notorious for producing fantastically mediocre food. To be fair, they earned this reputation. In serving food to hordes of little kids, quality seemed to fall by the wayside. With the immediate goal being getting food into every chirping little mouth with minimal complaint, and a tight budget for supplies, labor, and ingredients, cafeterias became the breeding grounds for mass-produced chicken nuggets and anything that could be frozen and prepared in gargantuan quantities. At first, no one was picky about the processed meat and canned cheese sauce. But today, with fat kids no longer just the one or two unfortunate picked-upon, traditional cafeteria food is being challenged and rethought.

Oregon has the lowest childhood obesity rate in the U.S., at 10 percent compared to the national 16 percent. Rick Sherman, director of nutrition services for the Eugene School District, is committed to keeping Oregon kids healthy. He is employed by Sodexo, a "Quality of Daily Life Solutions" company that works closely with Bill Clinton's Alliance for a Healthier Generation and Michelle Obama's Let's Move Initiative. Sodexo provides the food for the 7,000 or so school lunches that are distributed to the youth in Eugene daily. Sherman is a tall, thin, enthusiastic and kind-faced man, and he's worked with Sodexo for 30 years.

It's hard to imagine going to an elementary school without the pungent aroma of chicken nugget grease and canned vegetables rotting on Styrofoam trays in the trashcan. Some of my more treasured elementary school cafeteria memories revolve around pizza Fridays (with a helping of ranch dressing to dip the pizza in) and chocolate milk chugging contests. I couldn't quite wrap my head around the idea that lunches could actually become popular without offering junk foods as coercion to get kids to eat them.

According to Nicole Zammit, the Registered Dietitian for 4J, it's not that hard to offer kids food that is nutritious and popular, and also abides by USDA regulations. "The real challenge," she says, "is providing the menu we do while staying with an extremely tight budget with huge increases in food prices and labor."

The menu today isn't full of exotic tempeh dishes or soba noodles. Sherman admits, "If we let them, kids would choose pizza every day." Instead, he and Zammit pay attention to what kids are asking for, and try to incorporate their wishes into a more balanced eating regime.

One example is a reform of nachos.

Instead of offering the unhealthy, neon yellow cheese sauce, Zammit and Sherman have been working on coming up with a made-from-scratch recipe that includes only about six ingredients as opposed to the long list on the can. The creation of the new recipe involved student focus groups that tested the cheese sauce and got to vote on its quality. "Kids are used to texture, color, and mouth feel. When you go from an artificial product to a real cheese sauce, some kids react by saying 'I don't even want to try that,'" said Zammit. "Especially in the high schools, it's difficult to get students to accept that kind of dramatic change." The cheese sauce is still fairly new, but the wanted consistency has finally been reached, and it is being offered at the schools.

Each fall, Zammit and Sherman do a promotion called "vote and be heard" to get students' ideas and preferences. "Chicken nuggets and pizza are always favorites," Zammit said, "but we've been able to incorporate some other favorites into the mix as well." Some less stereotypical and healthier favorites are baked potatoes and taco bars. Zammit says she has no guilt about the potentially unhealthy taco bars, because she can "hide" chopped veggies in with the cooked ground beef, and the topping offerings include veggies. Some other popular foods are chicken noodle soup and breakfast for lunch (even though the kids aren't usually allowed to have syrup). Instead of the pizza Fridays I remember from elementary school, Zammit has come up with different "exciting" days like "vegetarian Fridays." When they do serve pizza, they emphasize that the focus is not on the pizza but on serving a "good mix of healthy meals" that meet federal and state requirements.

All this talk about health and sneaking veggies left me feeling a little sorry for the elementary schoolers of today. Lunchtime was only below recess in my fun-ranking scale of elementary school activities. I chose to tour Cesar Chavez elementary to see if the changes in the menu had changed the general happy feel I assign with my conception of a cafeteria.

The day I visited Cesar Chavez, there were five options available for the kids to choose: nachos (with the new cheese sauce), a chicken patty on a whole grain bun, a hearty garden salad, sweet and sour popcorn chicken on pineapple rice, or a tuna sandwich. The nachos I found pretty supreme.

I was also impressed by the "rainbow offering bar," which featured organic apples, orange slices, beans, corn, and pears. None of it looked like the standard iceberg lettuce or canned fruit in sweetened juice I remember from the cafeteria. The little tykes that filed past the sneeze guard didn't seem any less excited about the relatively healthy options being forced upon them.

Cesar Chavez also features a school garden, which Rick Sherman is very involved with. This year he's become a certified Master Gardner, and has even managed to harvest some of the lettuce from the garden and use it in the cafeteria. The schools receive money for growing the lettuce, just as if the cafeteria was buying it from any other source.

Sherman is also trying to establish criteria in order to distinguish certain cafeterias as "green cafeterias." Right now, there are only criteria for "green schools." "Cafeterias typically are one of the largest potential producers of trash," Sherman said. "I want to try and establish a zero waste (or as close as possible) program." These criteria would include things like low-temperature dishwashers, re-useable plasticware, a school garden, a composting procedure, and "recycling, of course."

At Cesar Chavez, the kids all line up at the recycling/composting station when they're finished eating. It's pretty adorable, all of these little teeny boppers scraping their scraps in the correct bins and placing their plastic trays in a neat little stack. Cesar Chavez has a gigantic compost bin, and all of the food goes through the proper composting stages, eventually arriving in the school garden.

Since I wasn't particularly fit as a preteen, I suppose it is not fit to advocate the diet I followed in those years, eating mainly the cafeteria offerings that included cheese and butter and went well with ranch dressing. It's probably a good thing to never even expose a vulnerable young child to the lardy deliciousness of ranch dressing. Though bans and extensive regulations on food are daunting and a little unnerving to advocates of liberal parenting, the cafeterias in Eugene are using the current regulations to change their offerings in a largely appealing way.

An Eye for a Nye

The Science Guy drops knowledge at the Willamette University commencement.

words **BRETT SISUN**
art **MEAGHAN LARKIN**

On a shining Sunday morning after a weekend filled with vision quests and wildflowers, I embarked on a spirit journey to Salem, Ore., with my saucy, hood-rich editor Noah DeWitt. This was no ordinary spirit journey, however. Instead of the usual dose of peyote and engagement in ritual bird calling, we were attending the Willamette University Class of 2011 graduation, searching tirelessly for the ever-illusive educational hero of our childhood, Bill Nye the Science Guy.

William Sanford Nye was the TV host for the 1990s' most popular science education show, *Bill Nye the Science Guy*. Nye, a lanky and skeletal comedian with a fresh-as-beast bowtie, had all kinds of cool bubbling beakers, demonstrations about volcanoes, quicksand, planetary space, and the fun of composting. Most importantly, he had kick-butt parodies of '90s pop songs (TLC and Salt-n-Pepa, among the many). When we heard that Nye would be speaking at the Willamette University commencement, there was an uncontrollable frenzy of excitement for the return of the science-comedy messiah.

But after an intensive internet search for folklore surrounding Nye, I learned that not everyone thought fondly of him. According to one internet blogger Nye was "flat out rude." Another claimed, "When Bill came to CU, he was a jerk!" Could it have been that our renowned scientific star had fallen from grace? I became obsessed with the notion of interviewing Nye, and exposing his true nature to the world. Noah and I knew what we had to do: get to that commencement speech and tear the house down. Or probably just bug Nye until he spoke with us.

"Dude, what a joke of a commencement speaker," I said as we entered the campus. Noah laughed, "Ya dude, Bill Nye? What the heck!" We approached an enormous white tent hanger with a crowd of at least 8,000 seated on the main University lawn. And there he was: clad in ceremonial regalia, donning a WU-colored bowtie and a peppy, priceless smile. Bill Frickin' Nye. He was real. Nye was seated on the stage, waiting for his cue to speak.

We waited through award after award, never ending applauses, and slow-spoken speeches about accomplishment, privilege, and the future. As the President of the school approached the podium to introduce the next speaker, I could tell by his smile that finally, it was time.

I was taken aback by the list of Nye's credentials. He's a mechanical engineer coming from Cornell University, and has held it down at places like Boeing and Johns Hopkins. He's the executive director of the Planetary Society, and he has patents for magnifiers made from water and a linked system of sundials around the world. I had always thought he was just, well, a "science guy."

As Nye approached the stage, the audience began roaring his famous TV anthem: "Bill! Bill! Bill!"

"Good, day! Thank you all for coming, glad you could set aside the time!" After laughter and applause, he addressed the graduating class directly: "This place has changed you, and our hope is that you will go out and change the world!"

He spoke about the growing world population, climate change, Lady Gaga, and his experience with Barry Manilow. After zoning out for a bit, daydreaming about ambushing Nye for an interview, I tuned in again as he began telling a poignant story about when his third grade teacher compared the number of stars in the universe with grains of sand on a beach:

"I was paralyzed by self-doubt. I am just a tiny speck of a kid standing on a beach, and that beach is one of many beaches on the planet that turns out to be pretty small. Furthermore, my home speck, the Earth, is just a speck, orbiting a completely unremarkable star, which is just another speck in a galaxy of stars, the galaxy in turn being another speck among galactic specks! I am a speck, on a speck, orbiting a speck, in the middle of deep spacey specklessness! I don't matter at all! But then I think, wait, I have a brain… and wait, I can imagine all this. That my friends, is wonderful, that is remarkable, that is venerable, that is worthy of respect. That is the passion, beauty, and joy — the P, B, and J. The joy of creation, the joy of discovery, the joy of leaving the world better than you found it."

In that moment, everything changed. My perception began telescoping out. I could see the white tent we were all under, a dot on the swirling marble of Earth. I had been so wrapped up in the idea of interviewing Nye that I had forgotten why he was here in the first place. I just needed to listen. All my intent, impatience, and motive dissolved. The triumph and pain of my life came to me, in a single glorious breath, and left me to rise in the spring air. There was no need for an interview. Noah and I looked at each other, both knowing, without words, what Bill Nye the Science Guy had just opened. He had shown us a perspective of the spirit and of the soul. He'd shown us a perspective of science.

As he exited the stage to an ecstatic and touching applause, I too joined the chorus, chanting: "Bill! Bill! Bill!"

HOMELESS *Doesn't Mean* HELPLESS

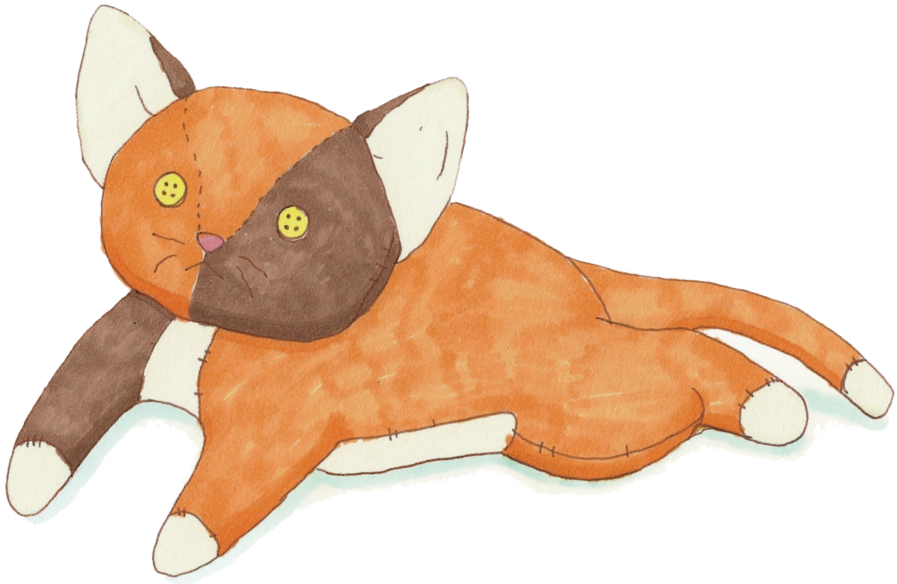
First Place Kid's Center offers education for at-risk preschoolers. But for how much longer?

words **SAIGE KOLPACK**
art **TAYLOR JOHNSTON**

Jake Spavins sits in the office behind First Place Kid's Center. A volunteer walks in with a basket of Beanie Babies. "Do certain kids get certain ones?" she asks. "Yeah," Spavins replies. "Savannah gets the lamb, Xavier gets the monkey."

Upon first glance this preschool appears to be like any other. It has circle time, a craft area, cubbies and trained teachers. The day I visited they were learning about the ocean. They read a book about "too many sharks in the bed" and made fishes out of construction paper, some very precisely and others rather recklessly gluing on each individual scale. The difference is 50 percent of the children enrolled at First Place are actively homeless. Some of the students have attended the program while living in their family's cars. That's where the Beanie Baby ownership becomes an issue; there's a lot of stress around toys and supplies because of security issues some of the children have developed after previously having lost personal possessions.

The program was Spavins' idea. He began working at First Place as a student teacher while he attended the Special Education Masters Program at the University of Oregon. When he first arrived it was just a day care program that had basically gotten out of control. Kids running up the walls, peeing on the playground, "the inmates were running the asylum." So Spavins created a structured program that these kids could actually benefit from.



"He basically made this place what it is", said Shira Einstein, a volunteer at the school. "He is really an advocate for these kids."

Being around children is something Spavins became accustomed to at a young age, growing up in Gold Beach, Ore. with a mother who was a practicing midwife. "I would come home from school and there would be pregnant women and children in the living room," said Spavins. After school budget cuts dampened his dream of being a high school history teacher, Spavins turned to working with adults with disabilities. From there he began to work with children with autism and special needs and finally to children at risk. "It wasn't my plan, but I'm really good at it. What I really enjoy about it is the challenge of it, watching them grow and learn," said Spavins.

The difficulty with working with at-risk children is that what meets their needs one day may not meet their needs the next day because they have an extremely unstable home life. "Children learn survival skills, and they are going to throw tantrums to keep themselves alive," said Spavins. If a parent is too stoned to take care of his or her child, a tantrum is what might get that child fed. At First Place the teachers recognize the validity of the tantrum and make sure the children do too. They try to recognize the emotion behind the tantrum and then try to teach the child other ways to handle the problem that are more socially acceptable.

The main point is to create a home-based classroom where the kids can build self-esteem, feel empowered and hopefully find a path to a brighter future. The school provides certain amenities that most other kids are lucky enough to get at home. They have a "body rest time" from 1 to 3 that's basically your average naptime, but for some of the kids, it's the best rest they get. Spavins wants all the kids to feel like they are rock stars.

However, like all the other schools in the 4J district, First Place is strapped for cash, and when school lets out this June, its doors will close for good. When asked what he feels the impact of the program's closing will be, Spavins replied, "We expose children to opportunity; I don't know how you measure the loss of that." The program finds kids and families who have fallen through the cracks and gets them back on their feet.

Spavins, along with the other First Place teachers, is now looking for a new job. He is currently interviewing to be the director at Moss Street Children's Center. "My time here is done," he said. However he still plans to volunteer with the First Place Family Development Center, which will continue to serve homeless families after the school is closed. There's a feeling of defeat mixed with frustration that now sits over the school.

First Place Kid's Center has provided a necessary service for a community that normally goes unnoticed. The school may be closing, but its impact on families it served won't be lost. Spavins feels that a former child in the program, Joey, summed up the whole idea. Joey's words, which hang laminated on a wall in the school, read: "Once upon a time, everybody loved me. They took pictures of me. They colored with me. They enjoyed the sun with me. Everybody smelled flowers with me. Everybody adventure rocks with me. [Everybody] holds hands with me. The End! That's the whole thing."

Tucked away behind South Eugene High School, few people other than those who worked there and those who needed it even knew about First Place Kid's Center. The closing of their doors shouldn't be the cause of our attention. Programs like First Place and the needs of the families they serve can't continue to go unnoticed. We need to reorganize our priorities, and our tax dollars, so places like First Place can keep their well-deserved place in our community.

UNSCHOOLING

{Children direct their own learning in Portland homeschooling project}

words and photos **JENNIFER BUSBY**

A pile of shoes, large and small, rest on the unfinished wood porch near the front door of Ariel Wilsey-Gopp's northeast Portland home. Once a week, her home is also a schoolhouse. There is no coat closet and no cubbies. Instead, the first children to arrive heap their boots onto the pile as her husband, Will, is heading out the door to work.

Instead of enrolling their children in conventional schools, a group of Portland, Ore. parents, Wilsey-Gopp among them, has taken the education of their five young children into their own hands. The children rotate between homes throughout the week and spend hours each day exploring the mechanisms of the world through arts and tactile interaction. They call what they do unschooling.

Wilsey-Gopp recognizes that the name appears cynical. "It sounds like we're ripping our kids out of school," she says. Her aim for unschooling is to cultivate a community of learners. She wants her daughter, Dora, to seek education throughout her life, instead of confining learning to a classroom in a school.

"I don't think any of us are anti-school," parent Heidi Nelms says, "I'm anti bad school for sure."

Nelms, who also teaches music at Trillium Charter School, hosts once each week. She and David Hamma, her husband, often take the small group of children for walks in the forest and embark on projects focused around music and art.

But because the program is child-driven, their 6-year-old son's resistance to music has prevented her from incorporating more music education into the activities the children participate in at her home.

Spontaneous songs — like when Nelms makes up interactive tunes about what the kids are doing — are more effective at getting her son, Humphrey, and the others involved than when she designates specific times for music.

"When I'm at home, I'm mom, not a music teacher," she says of Humphrey's perspective. Nelms is the bassist and a vocalist for Portland band Moon Debris, and Hamma plays guitar and sings in the band.

Because she's been pursuing music for almost two decades and it's become a part of her teaching at Trillium, she'd like to bring more music into her time with the children, but won't force the issue.

Both Nelms and Wilsey-Gopp had negative experiences in school as children. It wasn't until college that either felt truly excited about learning. Part of that engagement was feeling as though they could determine what they were studying. In college, Nelms says, she was treated like an adult; she was there because she wanted to be.

Wilsey-Gopp remembers her Montessori preschool fondly. There were drum circles and it tended toward "hippie-ish," she says, but she loved the arts and music focus. After that, she endured a private, all-girls school where uniforms were strictly enforced and arts and music were notably absent. High school, in San Francisco, was awful in its own way, she remembers. At least there was a small student-to-teacher ratio at the private school she attended from third through eighth grade. There were so many students at her high school — 4500 — that she got lost in the shuffle. She struggled with learning from a textbook and found little inspiration in her jaded teachers.

Like Nelms, she found her passion for learning in college. Wilsey-Gopp attended Hampshire College in Massachusetts, where she fell in love with a self-determined learning style that still reminds her of homeschooling. It is this experience that brought her to unschooling, along with reading Grace Lleweylln's The Teenage Liberation Handbook.

Lleweylln's book builds on the theories of John Holt, who wrote in the 1970s and is considered the father of unschooling. Hamma read Holt's Teach Your Own, which pushed him to explore unschooling further.

"We're as concerned about him [Humphrey] falling prey to our dogma as anyone else's," says Hamma of his son. "I guess you could say our main goal is that he be able to think for himself and motivate himself toward what it is that moves or inspires him."

"I don't really have a big picture in my mind," Nelms says, "We're just playing it by ear." She says that there are no concrete rules in unschooling. Her and Hamma's schedules have allowed them plenty of time to devote to walks in the forest, making bones out of clay, constructing mud volcanoes, and music time. In the future, however, changing schedules may mean that Humphrey will transition into attending school elsewhere. If that happened, she would want him to go to a school like Trillium, where she teaches. The school is devoted to K-12 and, much like unschooling, is focused on holistic development.

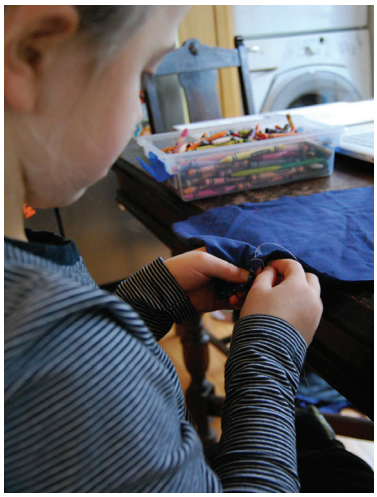
According to its mission statement, Trillium seeks to develop more than basic reading, writing, and math skills. Its goal is to engage lifelong learners with their communities through participatory learning.

At Wilsey-Gopp's home, Humphrey and Eloise Smith, 5, embark on elaborate construction projects every other week. She doesn't plan the projects. Instead, she sets out materials and lets the children decide what to do with them. It's this kind of experiential, self-directed learning that is at the core of unschooling. When the duo is indecisive, Wilsey-Gopp will begin interacting with the materials herself, in hopes of inspiring imaginative play.

As they work through the problems that arise during construction, she encourages critical thinking. Several times during one three-hour stretch of unschooling at Wilsey-Gopp's home, she asks for clarification about Eloise's goals.

Does she want to cover the whole box with fabric or make something that goes inside, Wilsey-Gopp asks.

What if she turned the box over to make the box into a platform? She demonstrates, turning the flat base toward the ceiling.



Eloise flips the box back over. She wants the mattress she's making to go inside, she says. She also wants to sew a pillow to match. She measures out a rectangle of dark blue fabric, tracing the outline of the box onto it with orange crayon. She cuts it out with a pair of safety scissors and begins the work of pinning the fabric together at the edges.

Wilsey-Gopp finds Eloise a needle and thread as Humphrey continues to draw at the other end of the worn kitchen table. Sewing is something that Eloise has learned from her parents. It is also something that Wilsey-Gopp knows little about, so she lets Eloise take the lead. "We'll learn from something she's doing," she says of the 5-year-old.

Because unschooling is child-driven, it defies the traditional top-down learning structures common in formal schools. The children have more of an opportunity to share their own interests with both facilitators and other children. Eloise will bring sewing and knitting projects that she's working on to Wilsey-Gopp's home.

As the children grow, these moments will become more frequent, Wilsey-Gopp says. A time will come when she and the other parents cannot satisfy the depth of their children's curiosities.

"Learning isn't something you go somewhere to do but something that is simply happening all the time, with or without our instruction," Hamma says. "We've observed this with Humphrey time and again, as he picks things up without any prompting on our part."

To balance the limitations of unschooling, Wilsey-Gopp sees value in taking formal classes as a way to continue education into adulthood. Her 3-year-old, Dora, takes gymnastic classes and attends Escuela Viva, a dual-language school where she's learning Spanish. Humphrey and Eloise have also taken classes outside of unschooling.

Do Jump, a physical theater school in southeast Portland provides class times specifically for homeschooled children. They meet earlier in the day, when other children are at public and private schools. While unschooling remains a core group of five children for now, these other classes are often taken with other friends.

For her son, Nelms says, having a familiar group of friends is important, but so is venturing into larger groups of people. As he matures, she'd like him to be comfortable in such situations. Throwing him into a kindergarten class with 20 strangers seemed counterintuitive to her.

Within the frame of unschooling, there are no bells. Nelms appreciates the agency this gives each child. In a traditional school, as soon as children become really interested in a project, they're often forced to move onto the next activity. "I like the pacing," Nelms says of unschooling, "Every kid can pace themselves."

Because of their varying interests and ability levels, unschooling all of the children at once can present a challenge. While some are starting to read and write at a basic level, others are still fascinated by the way a cotton ball changes when it is dunked in a glass of water. To better cater to their range of development, Wilsey-Gopp will host the two older children while Sam Schauer and Lahela King host the three younger children. Each week they switch.

She likes hosting half of the group because it gives her more time to devote to each child. Over several sessions, Eloise and Humphrey constructed complete suits of armor out of cardboard.

While the children directed the project, she helped them figure out technical details like how to make the joints bend. "I definitely don't feel like a teacher," she says.

Unschooling uses art as a gateway to practical knowledge. As Humphrey and Eloise worked on their suits of armor, Wilsey-Gopp found a way to naturally incorporate measuring and mathematical skills into their play. She says she uses objects to open up concepts when they are relevant.

As Wilsey-Gopp rounded up Dora and Esme Smith, 3, for a snack and a story, Eloise put down her sewing and trundled over to the blue brocade couch, bowl of trail-mix in tow. Humphrey remained focused on his drawing, eventually wandering over to the sofa to hear the last few stories.

On this unusual day, four of the five unschoolers huddled around Wilsey-Gopp as she read to them. Their parents would arrive by bicycle in an hour, rain pants in tow, to pick up their children. The pile of shoes by the door would shrink again until next week, when it was time again to host unschooling.

PROFESSOR TRADING KARDZ™

1

P W O S E V S B D N M L O
B E R L L A E W O A U S D
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A D A T E E K S B D H A U
R O T T E R P O P E D J G

CHILDHOOD ISSUE
WORD SEARCH

ANGELICA
DOOFUS
BOWLCUT
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POG
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BOOGER
BOOBLESS
TAMAGACHI
GAK
LUNCHABLE

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BENJAMIN SAUNDERS

DEPARTMENT: English
POSITION: Entrenched
SUPER POWER: Tireless Talker

LEAST FAVORITE VEGETABLE: The kind that watch Fox News. (I don't mean to insult any actual vegetables with this response. In fact, I like vegetables of all types, and am particularly fond of the leafy greens.)

NATURAL HABITAT: Bookshops, comic book stores, museums, and most other places nerds gather.

GREATEST CHILDHOOD FEAR: That I was a big nerd. (I'm cool with it now.)

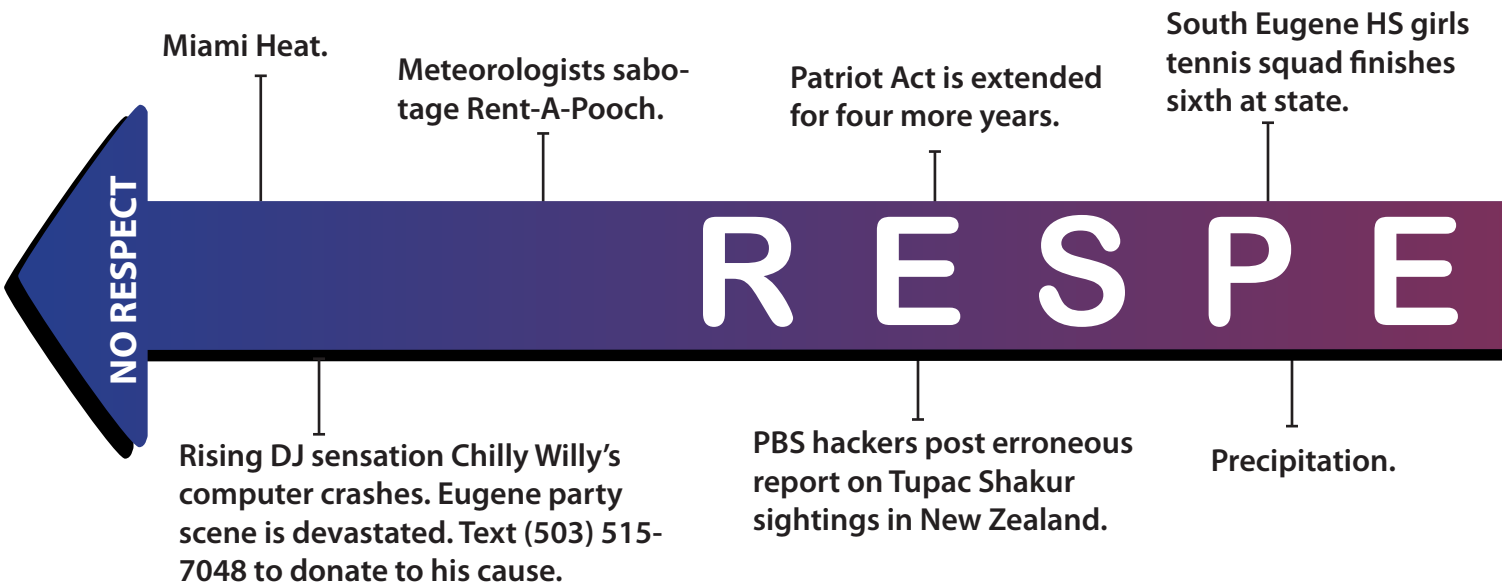
JUDITH RAISKIN

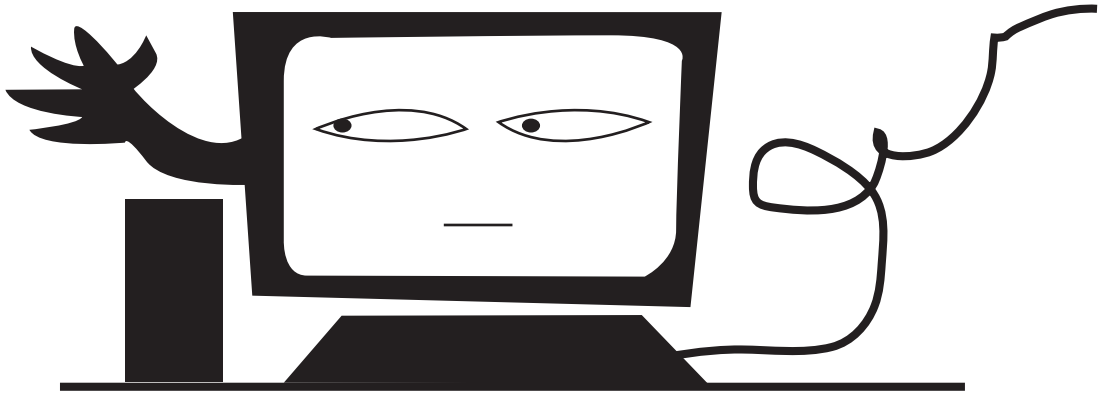
DEPARTMENT: Women's and Gender Studies
POSITION: Associate Professor
SUPER POWER: B.S. Detection (no kidding)

LEAST FAVORITE VEGETABLE: S/he holds public office, so it would be impolite to say

NATURAL HABITAT: A couch in a shaft of sunlight

GREATEST CHILDHOOD FEAR: Being in school forever


Miami Heat.
Meteorologists sabotage Rent-A-Pooch.
Patriot Act is extended for four more years.
South Eugene HS girls tennis squad finishes sixth at state.
NO RESPECT
R E S P E
Rising DJ sensation Chilly Willy's computer crashes. Eugene party scene is devastated. Text (503) 515-7048 to donate to his cause.
PBS hackers post erroneous report on Tupac Shakur sightings in New Zealand.
Precipitation.



TO CATCH A PREDATOR

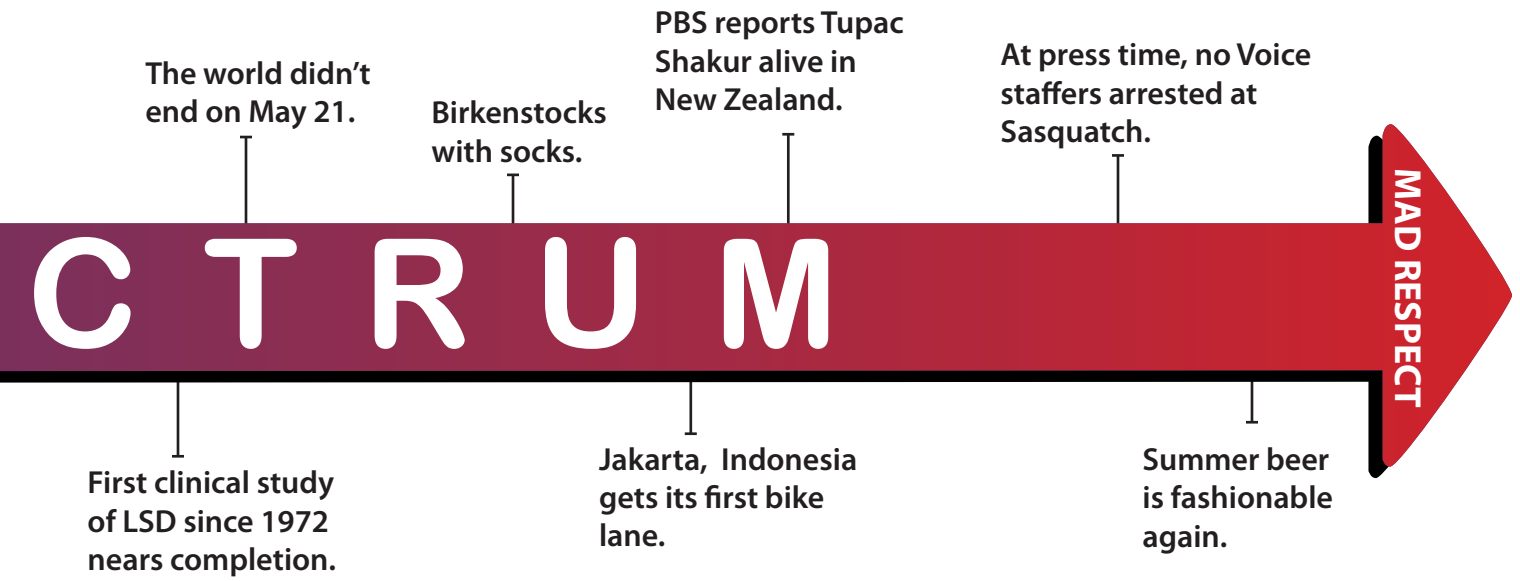
words **PEDRO MCMURPHY**

Pedro McMurphy's the name, and catchin' predators is my game — a game I have been losing as of yet, but a game nonetheless. Ever since I heard the OREGON VOICE was set to release the Childhood Issue, I made it a goal to do something for the children and take at least one sexual predator off the streets and put him behind bars … the bars of a prison!

To begin my hunt, I checked out the hot spot for local creeps, Craigslist. I scoured the "casual encounters" section for 18 to 20 year olds saying they were looking to hook up with someone younger. I figured, what's younger than 18? Minors! These freaky peeps were definitely looking to get down with a young'n. So I replied to these ads with a clever mix of true and false information. "Hey, I'm Pedro," I would say. "I'm 15 and down to party." My plan was to lure one of these creeps into a vacant lot, where I could either set up an elaborate device based on the popular board game "Mouse Trap," or simply photograph the predator from a distance and send the picture to the police, with a note scrawled on the back reading "Arrest this man. He wants to bone a teen." Unfortunately this plan never made it past the drawing board, as not a single person replied to my emails.

I knew I had to try a different approach, so I made myself a profile at TeenChat.com. For age I put "15." Among the "reasons for joining" options, I chose "love, sweet sweet love." With my profile set up, I entered the chat room and immediately realized that I was probably in a chat room with real teens, and that I was the adult pretending to be 15. In a shocking turn of events, I went from hunting predators to being a predator myself.

At this point I decided it was time for this old hound to retire. Better to burn out than to fade away. Also, better to burn out than to be a creeper. I learned the hard way that you can't catch a pedophile without kind of being a pedophile. And you can't be a pedophile without – actually, I should just end that sentence there. You can't be a pedophile.


The world didn't end on May 21.
Birkenstocks with socks.
PBS reports Tupac Shakur alive in New Zealand.
At press time, no Voice staffers arrested at Sasquatch.
C T R U M
MAD RESPECT
First clinical study of LSD since 1972 nears completion.
Jakarta, Indonesia gets its first bike lane.
Summer beer is fashionable again.

artist: Bosco Delrey
album: Everybody Man

words **BEN STONE**

If you look at the artist roster for the Mad Decent record label, among all the crazy musicians who hump the electro/dancehall/dub styles deep into the night, there's a guy named Bosco Delrey. He uses his voice, a guitar, an MPC sampler, synthesizers, and mysterious effects to create a rockabilly sound that label boss Diplo described as "garbage can Elvis." Maybe its because I know very little about Elvis Presley, but I love that comparison. The one Elvis song that I've done some hard grooving to is "That's All Right." For the chorus of that song, Elvis slides up to the high notes and sings, "That's all riiight, now, mamaaaa, any way you doooo." It always surprises me how slick and easy he makes that sound, despite it being pretty high and backed by only a little rhythm guitar dude. It's that way with Bosco Delrey's first album, *Everybody Wah*.

A nice spot on the album is "Down We Go." It's got a lovely shuffle to it, some nice soft singing, and a catchy, doo-wop-sounding chorus. After a little bit, the song drops into an instrumental section, and something that sounds like a slide steel guitar comes in. But it sounds more like a synthesizer, and it wobbles peacefully in and out of the rest of the song. Delrey isn't trying to impress people with the more modern rhythms and instrumentation he uses. He uses his own groovy, pretty compositions to play the old sound that he loves, and the new synthesized sounds rub off like they're just some more instruments in a jam circle.

All this frames a great space for Delrey's voice, which might be the best thing about this record. He's calm, romantic, and twangy, singing about love, running away, and ghosts like it all happened a while ago but he hasn't stopped thinking about it. This is electrified summertime music — for the adventures and the lovin', as well as reminiscing about it months later.

Rated: Grape BubbleTape out of Big League Chew.

game: Super Smash Bros
console: Nintendo 64
words **WILL PAUGH**

If you had friends growing up, Super Smash Bros. was probably the reason why. This legend of a Nintendo 64 game housed all of your fantasies of videogame characters one day crossing franchises — and beating the heck out of each other. Have you ever wanted to see Pikachu take a punch in the face from Mario? Smash Bros. has your back.

The real draw is the multiplayer; very few games can boast the ability to make complete strangers giggle at each other while frantically mashing a controller. The premise of the game is simple and repetitive, the goal being to knock other players off-screen any way possible. But its simplicity isn't a shortcoming; it makes the game accessible to nearly anyone.

Hands down, Super Smash Bros. is a masterpiece. It skillfully blends violence (attacking characters with laser guns, baseball bats, etc.) with lighthearted and whacky fun for the whole family. The game is playful yet violent, repetitive yet addictive.

I urge you to commemorate your childhood with the game that made it awesome. Get to that attic, crawlspace, or wherever your N64 is (hopefully next to your TV) and duke it out already.

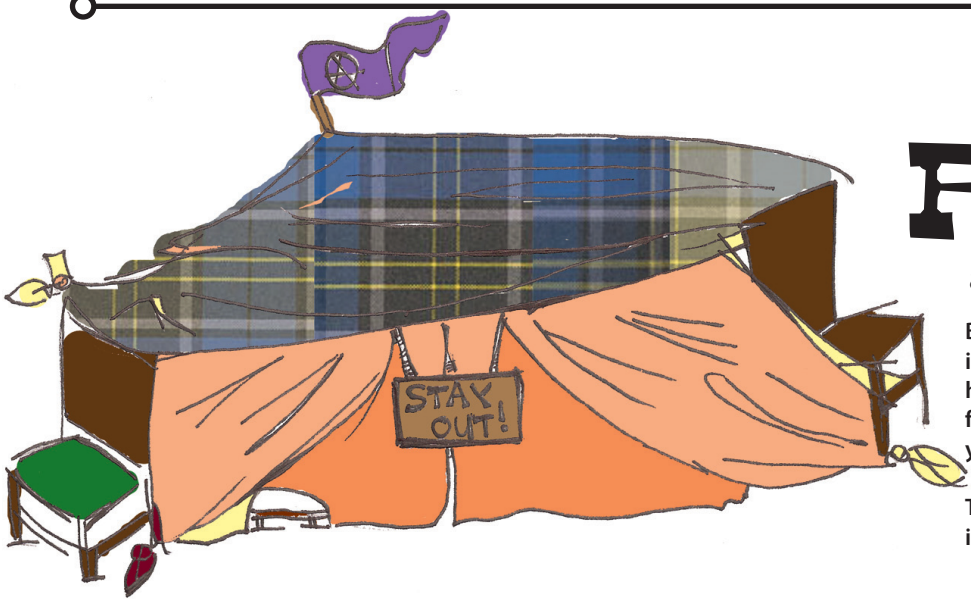
Rated: One falcon punch of nostalgia.

artist: Black Lips
album: Arabia Mountain
words **CARA MERENDINO**

The Atlanta garage-punk quartet is back with a sixth studio album, *Arabia Mountain*, and like those that came before it, it will get stuck in your head. In true Black Lips fashion, the new album recalls the grimy, "good ol' days" rock and roll sound with simple song structures and catchy licks, but there is something different about this one. Perhaps it is that *Arabia Mountain* was produced by Mark Ronson, the British DJ and guitarist who is most well-known for producing Amy Winehouse's Grammy award-winning record *Back to Black*. The British rock and roll thing definitely resonates in a lot of the tunes, some of which sound strangely like lost tracks off the Rolling Stones' *Exile on Main Street*. (Seriously, listen to "Rocks Off" [by the Stones] immediately following "Dumpster Dive" [by the Lips]. It might even make you a little mad… but it's good.) The album works well as a whole, but is certainly is a departure from the stripped-down lo-fi kick that is present in earlier Black Lips records. While still relatively raw, songs like the opening track "Family Tree" and later, "Mad Dog," feature some prominent horns that oscillate between ska and funk styles. All in all, this album is still the Black Lips, but it kind of seems like the Black Lips trying to be a garage-rock, surf-punk, honky-tonk, ska-funk rock-and-roll band all at once, which is a little strange. *Arabia Mountain* comes out June 7th, and while it doesn't provide anything particularly revolutionary, it is a solid record that pays some legitimate homage to the rock and roll elements we love most.

Rated: Chicken and Grits out of Tea and Crumpets.

DIY:



FORTS

art and words **CARA MERENDINO**

Builder beware: The fort is a magical entity of the imagination. While I can direct you with some helpful hints and bits of knowledge from my own fort schematics, ultimately it is you who must be your own master architect.

That being said, fort-building can be broken down into three skill levels, listed and explained below.

BEGINNER: Bed Fort

Supplies: Bed, top sheet and/or blanket, flashlight.

To Construct:

To a newcomer on the fort frontier, it is important to get comfortable in typical fort conditions in order to develop an understanding of the sanctity of small, enclosed spaces. A good way to suppress potential claustrophobia and grow in touch with the essence of the fort is to create a cotton dome over your bed frame with your top sheet, using rubber bands, hair ties, or pure balance. In this situation, beginners will find themselves familiar with their surroundings while being introduced to the security and newfound sense of authority that comes with being king or queen of one's own castle. Activities suitable for this kind of fort include shadow puppets and reading ghost stories, as well as supplementing sleepover fun.

INTERMEDIATE: The Living-Room Fort

Supplies: Chairs, tables, dressers, sheets, heavy-weighted objects, rubber bands, cardboard, marker, imagination.

To Construct:

1. Scope out the scene.
Your house is your playground. Look around to see what furniture can easily be moved without taking too many knick-knacks off of anything. Couches make for sturdy bases, but they tend to be difficult to secure sheets to unless you place the sheet between the couch and the wall, and even then, it can be tricky. Chairs with knobs on the top and kitchen tables are lightweight, easy to move, and provide almost instantaneous fort-like ambiance. It's important to work with what you got in terms of the heavy stuff: dressers are solid bases, but should not be moved. If you build your fort in accordance with what the room has to offer, it will promise you maximum security and minimal clean-up.

2. Erect a skeleton
Think about what the general shape you want your fort to take, and set up chairs and tables accordingly. Placing a tall chair or stool in the middle of your skeleton will provide luxurious high-ceilings, as well as serious doorframe potential should you choose to make your fort a three-bedroom chateau. When using tables, take into consideration the height of the ceiling. If you can't sit comfortably under it, you might wanna leave the table out.

3. Façade
Now it's fort time. Using whatever sheets, blankets, and miscellaneous linens you scrounged up, begin to cover your skeleton in blankets. Some methods for securing the position of the linens include weighting them down with candlesticks, tying the corners to knobby chair ends, and tucking sheets between the walls and heavy furniture. Be careful to leave enough slack on the sheets between the chairs, or else you risk your own creation caving in on you with one wrong move. Balance is key at this stage to ensure durability. Make sure to leave a door to get in!

4. Claim it
This fort is yours. Let everyone know it. Make a sign, raise a flag, claim your ground. No boys allowed? Fine. Keep out? It's your prerogative. Your fort, your rules, no questions.

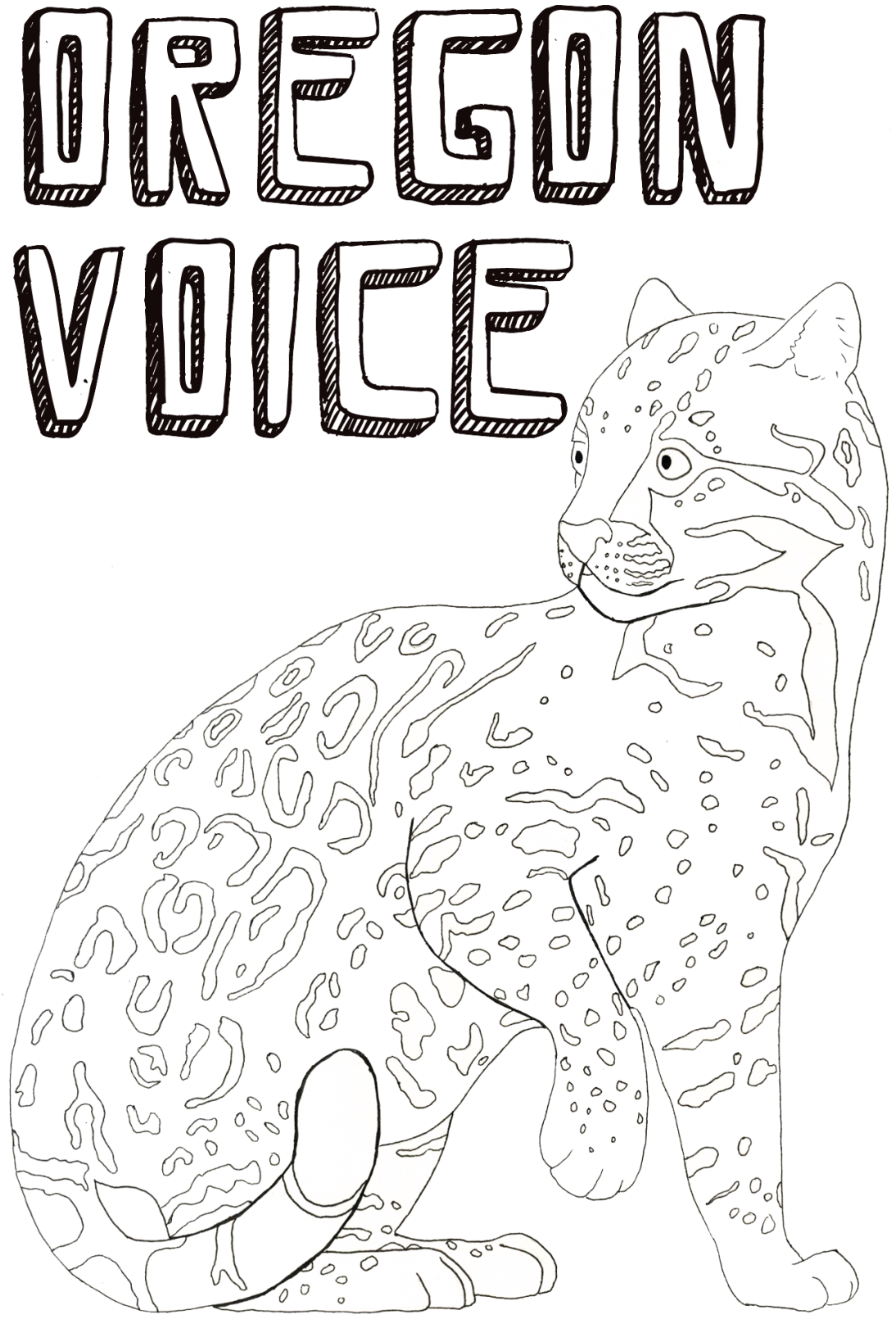
5. Own it
Invite your friends over. Forts are meant to be shared, but only with the right people. Beware of particularly clumsy or accident-prone friends, they are a hazard to your temple.

EXPERT: Multi-level Couch Fort

Supplies: Hell of couches, strong friends, Zen, sheets (optional).

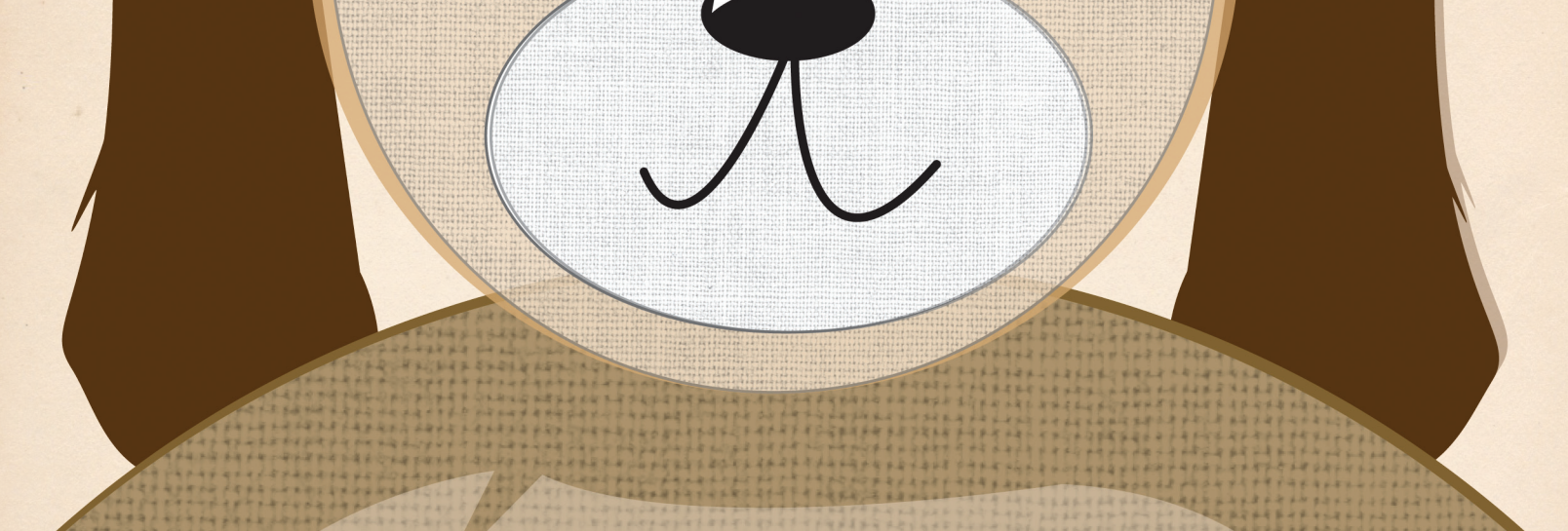
To Construct:

This is really a case-by-case kind of deal. I've only seen a few couch forts in my day, and they are not easy. They take resources. To make a good couch fort, you should have at least six couches, all of which are weighted evenly throughout. Couches with dainty legs have no place here. Nay, the couch fort relies on old, smelly garage-sale tweed with beer stains and love juice from who-knows-where, stacked according to your imagination… but I suggest thinking in multiple levels. Sheets can be utilized to fill in gaps between the couches, but you should really rely on your sense of balance and Zen to create a sturdy, climbable structure that will hold a lot of people. Be smart and semi-safe in your construction to prevent falling couches, and go nuts!



CHILDHOOD ISSUE COLORING BOOK PAGE

art **TAYLOR JOHNSTON**



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